

P R E S S K I T

GIRLPOWER

TAKING A STAND AGAINST PREJUDICE, BEING A WOMAN, TRAVELLING AROUND THE WORLD, WRITING ONE'S NAME AND NOT GETTING CAUGHT IN THE ACT... AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FILM ABOUT THE LIFE OF SANY AND OTHER FEMALE GRAFFITI WRITERS FROM FIFTEEN CITIES, LIVING A DOUBLE-LIFE AND RISKING EVERYTHING FOR THEIR CONTROVERSIAL PASSION – GRAFFITI.

[TRAILER](#)

WWW.GIRLPOWERMOMIE.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/GIRLPOWERMOMIE

[PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD](#)

PREMIERE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: 27 FEBRUARY 2016

Country of origin: The Czech Republic

Genre: Documentary

Running time: 90 minutes

CREATIVE TEAM:

Story: Sany

Director: Sany, Jan Zajíček

Producer: Punk Film, s.r.o. / Martin Hůlovec

Executive Producer: Filip Čermák

Producer Czech Television: Martina Šantavá

Written by: Sany, Jan Zajíček, Zdeněk Marek

Cinematography: Ondřej Rybár

Editor: Zdeněk Marek

Sound: Petr Hofman

Music: Ondřej Skala

Script Editor: Veronika Korčáková

Coproducers: Sany, Czech Television

Project Partners: BU2R

Distribution in the Czech Republic: A Company

Graphics: Advance Design

Executive Producer Czech Television : Roman Blaas

LOGLINE:

A film only a graffiti artist could make. If dreams become reality and the price you pay for it.

SYNOPSIS:

Girl Power is a documentary about women who devote their lives to the graffiti subculture normally dominated by males. At the heart of the documentary is the strong autobiographical story of Prague graffiti artist – a female writer called Sany, who made the film herself, travelling around the world over more than the seven years, making friends with women writers from fifteen different cities. A fascinating travelogue, it gives a new perspective on a phenomenon more often characterized by the general public as vandalism, but which can also be a way of life.



ABOUT THE FILM GIRL POWER:

Girl Power is a documentary that introduces you to female graffiti writers from fifteen cities around the world – from Prague to Moscow, Cape Town, Sydney, Biel, Madrid, Berlin, Toulouse, through Barcelona, all the way to New York. The graffiti community is predominantly a male world, and these males often share the view that graffiti – namely the illegal kind – is not for females. And yet women graffiti artists have become increasingly more emancipated in recent years; there are female graffiti shows, magazines and websites.

Girl Power captures the stories of women and girls who have succeeded in the male graffiti world. We see them breaking into well-guarded train depots and in their normal “civilian” life. However, Girl Power does more than peer into the microcosm of the graffiti world; it tells the moving story of the Czech writer Sany, who, in 2008, decided to capture the process of female emancipation in graffiti on film and to give other females a chance to express themselves. It took her 7 long years to complete this documentary. We follow her life in graffiti, her motivation and her values as they change with the years.

We also meet her family, who are absolutely unaware of Sany’s second life. Sany sacrifices a lot for the film, but even when she’s at the limit of her powers, she refuses to give up on her dream – to make the very first movie depicting women in graffiti. She realised nobody could ever make it from the outside, because outsiders always spell incomprehension and danger for graffiti writers. The film itself does not advocate graffiti, but offers a fresh look at a global phenomenon which in most societies is seen as vandalism.

Grffiti writers usually can’t explain why they create graffiti. This is because graffiti is a form of addiction – a passion, an escape. It gives meaning, like love, religion, desire - the desire to make a mark, the urge to leave something behind, as old as mankind itself. “Girl Power showed me for the first time the strength some women have. For me, as a person with no connection to the world of graffiti, it was a fascinating glimpse behind the scenes of this issue. Our film is not just a documentary map of a human obsession, but above all the story of how far you can go in fulfilling your personal dreams,” says Martin Hülovec of Punk Film, producer of Girl Power.



INTERVIEW WITH SANY:

Sany studied marketing communication. She is one of the few active women writers in the Czech Republic. She has devoted herself to graffiti for almost 15 years. She is a member of two purely female graffiti crews - Girl Power and PUFF. She is actively involved in organizing cultural events in Prague and abroad. In Prague, she produced several graffiti and street art festivals such as The Martha Cooper Files and Past, Present, Future. She is regularly invited to graffiti jams and discussions on gender themes throughout Europe. Her works are included in many publications of graffiti.

How did you get involved in graffiti?

I was 15 years old at the turn of the millennium. I used to go to elementary school every day to Modřany. There were long lines of trams and I noticed that every day there were new graffiti tags. One day there was Ash and the next Today. Then I went to school and I saw them there again, so I started to look for connections. I wondered who was doing these things, and when and what they looked like. At the time I wasn't allowed go out at night, so I was fascinated. I began to try it out on paper, and then I started writing with my friend. After that we met another girl who wanted to write, and we set up the Girl Power crew. But, after a while the girls stopped coming and I was left alone in Prague.

What is the status of girls on the graffiti scene?

I've never divided graffiti into boys and girls, but the scene does. That's why I began to be so interested in the subject, I decided to support women in graffiti and so on. If you are talking about the Czech Republic, it's definitely a lot better than it used to be. Previously, the boys stole my paints and deliberately defacing my graffiti, writing "Get back in the kitchen". Happily, that's gone now and that doesn't happen to any girls starting now. I've been writing for almost 15 years, I've written a lot in that time, all around the world. In Prague I've organized a lot of events to promote the graffiti community, such as an exhibition of the Girl Power graffiti writers Forever, as well as an exhibition of the legendary photographer Martha Cooper, The Martha Cooper Files, a graffiti street art festival Past, Present, Future, or a showing of the Slovak graffiti video Show Must Go On. I filmed a documentary about graffiti, due for cinema release and broadcast on Czech television. I also help out with other smaller projects. I sort of passed the test with graffiti, proved that it's my passion and lifestyle. So you can't say it's not for girls anymore. Unfortunately, I do still think that, as a girl, you have to prove yourself more than the guys, or be really exceptional for the scene to accept you. That also applies in other areas where men dominate. Overall, more women write today because they have role models, that show them that it is possible. On the other hand, recently, when they published a book All City Queens that showcases the world of girls' graffiti, the book showed that there are still very few girls who stick to making graffiti and are really good at it. Maybe it has to be like that. Graffiti, after all, is illegal. It's not for everyone. But it really does not matter if you're a girl or a boy. But the thing is, if you believe it and do it with absolute dedication.

When and why did you decide to make the documentary Girl Power?

In 2009, when I started filming, I was the only girl in Prague actively writing. I knew that, out in the world, there were already quite a lot of girls who are also active. Quite a lot. I mean a few dozens, as opposed to tens of thousands of male graffiti writers. I was interested in the motivations of other female writers, why they would do something so dangerous and of course I wanted to meet them. Lastly, I wanted to promote women in graffiti and do something no one could take from us anymore. But I had no idea how much that decision would change my life, how long and hard a journey it would be.

How did it change your life?

Before the film I lived two lives that complemented each other and I alternated them as needed. To shoot Girl Power I gradually gave up the things that for a normal person would seem illogical. I lost a well-paid job as a manager, interrupted my studies at college and went into debt. This obviously affected my personal life. But I do not regret it. I know it was worth it. It's a struggle paying for a documentary!

What was your struggle like?

In the film it is easy to see how far someone is willing to go and what one sacrifices when one is going

for one's dream. From the beginning, we knew, even though we would be working on a commission basis, that the total budget would reach several millions. After a year of searching, we finally found a producer, agreed a preliminary contract and subsidized the shoot with our own money. In the end, our producer lost tens of millions on some other project, and then told us he wasn't interested any more in Girl Power and that we could sue if we wanted. But we knew that was pointless, had big financial problems as it was, but we continued shooting. A runaway train can't just stop like that. You'll see all this in Girl Power, because it became part of the same storyline. We finished the film thanks to the support of the urban project BU2R that has supported the film since 2012, when I first approached them. But we still had a mountain to climb: to edit 120 hours of filmed material. When we got it into a more fixed shape, we found a co-producer, gained the support of the State Fund for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography and the Czech Television. Thanks to them Girl Power went into post-production. Although, getting the film into the black I see as a long-term thing, I believe it can be done.

Was it worth it?

I ask myself that question almost every day. Had I not made these decisions, I would have been a completely different person. The question remains if I would have been a better one. But I am sure it was worth it. It took me 7 years to complete the film; that's quite a long time, and it seems even longer when you face nothing but problems. Many people I had trusted betrayed us in the first year of shooting, and this caused obstacles that ran the entire time. But that is the story of Girl Power. I frequently meet girls who tell me they are looking forward to seeing the film. I think many women can take encouragement from Girl Power to follow their dreams.

What sort of a documentary is Girl Power?

Girl Power is definitely a film nobody outside the graffiti community could make – even less so on this scale. It's the first documentary that has put this subject on film. It also breaks many stereotypes, and you can see a number of places you will probably never visit and situations normal people never get themselves into.

Who did you invite to collaborate on Girl Power?

The cinematographer Ondřej Rybář who has always been around in Prague hip hop circles. To this day I really cannot imagine another cameraman who would go to all those happenings and situations that were on occasion life-threatening. Then, Jan Zajíček, who worked on the completion of Girl Power as co-director. Not only is he an acclaimed director, but also a pioneer of the graffiti scene in our country. The edit was taken care of by Zdeněk Marek, who edited the documentary Český sen for example. The sound we entrusted to the talented Petr Hofman, the music was composed by Ondřej Skala, who you know from the project Jesus marches on Berlin.



INTERVIEW WITH JAN ZAJÍČEK:

Jan Zajíček is a graduate of FAMU, co-creator of the cycle of documentary films Kmeny / Tribes. The holder of many awards for music videos, he has represented the Czech Republic in the USA, Germany, Italy and Shanghai. He is a long-time member of the rap group WWW and one of the pioneers of graffiti in the Czech Republic, who wrote under the tag Skarf and belongs to TCP and ABX crews.

How do you see the status of women in the Czech graffiti scene?

Women were there from the beginning. At a time when in the whole of Czechoslovakia there were altogether about 15 to 20 people actively writing, including the first Czech woman graffiti writers Lely, Dandy and Chise, the position of women in the emerging local scene was perfectly equal. At the time it actually only consisted of a small group of friends and allies who mutually supported each other in their hobby. Only later was this replaced by a competitive spirit of rivalry and mutual predation. That all came about here spontaneously and quite naturally with the advent of other writers, competitors for the media limelight, understanding that the media in the world of graffiti meant space on city streets, surfaces and underground trains carriages. Even today, it's not written down anywhere, or a rule for anyone, that he or she cannot do this or that. There are only unwritten rules that are always set by the majority, who, in the graffiti world, are generally male. But every social norm is only relative and temporary. Change often starts with the individual, so in terms of women in graffiti in general - as Martha Cooper said: there are more and more of them...

How did you get into directing the final version of Girl Power?

By accident, I was one of those who was there at the birth of Czech graffiti scene. I was known as an insider.

Where do you see the strongest message of the film?

Graffiti is controversial because it does not respect private property, but it happens in a very romantic way. It is actually a rebellion against mainstream society. Still, it makes sense to be a rebel because rebellion and defiance against deeply rooted norms is one of the engines of social development. For true happiness, one needs to live in truth and that under all circumstances. Even if one's conduct is self-destructive. "As to Sany, I was sympathetic to her determination to stand up for her convictions despite the consequences that had for her. That's a universal story. Her specific situation, including the fact that she was a woman in the middle of the graffiti world of men, I see as merely the starting point and a given. In the pop-up book of the metropolis, I am also surprised how graffiti works as an indicator of the degree of freedom in any given society. My personal motivation to work on this was also a need I had to wrap up the topic of graffiti once and for all, something I hadn't previously done. My period as a writer remains a source of inspiration for me, the elementary school of my life. I took helping out with the film Girl Power as question of class solidarity," says Jan Zajíček, the co-director of Girl Power.

ABOUT PUNK FILM, S. R. O / The Producer of the Movie

This company, belonging to Martin Hůlavec, Ondřej Beránek and Jakub Drocár, has since its inception in 2003, produced several documentaries such as Půl čtvrté and Adventurer in Film Karel Zeman, directed by Tomáš Hodan, Krajina osud by Pavel Kolaja and several projects with the director Otakáro Schmidt. It also has been responsible for several medium-length films and the animated cartoon Lednice. It has co-produced several foreign films, for example the Indian film Rock Star, several hundred commercials for domestic and foreign markets, two dozen video clips for the alternative rock groups Visací zámek, Lucie and Mňága a Žďorp and several projects intended primarily for the television market.

ABOUT BU2R / Film Partner

BU2R is a unique platform of the firm Budweiser Budvar, which has, for nine years since 2007, promoted independent urban cultural projects that could not have gone ahead without its help. It focuses on authentic and original work across different generations of filmmakers and artists. Among the projects that came to fruition thanks to the support of BU2R are the Kmeny /Tribes series of books and documentaries, a book on Czech skateboarding Prkýnka na maso jsme uřízli, a book about the visual culture of the club scene Here Be Dogs, the Cinema Royal the film screenings and many others. BU2R has supported the creation of the film Girl Power since 2012 and its long-term support was crucial to completing the film. “We met Sany in about the third year of filming. Her energy and determination, not only for the film but for the whole idea of Girl Power, was simply unique. After watching the rough cuts, it was clear that this is a unique film, which we needed to support and complete,”explains Jakub Stránský of BU2R.

CONTACT FOR MEDIA

Punk Film, +420 251 553 992, gp.docu@gmail.com